

U. S. Dept. of Agriculture
Extension Service

Brief Summary of Progress Report
National Committee of Home Demonstration Leaders
1945 - 1946

The expansion of extension work made possible by the Bankhead-Flannagan funds and the economic and social adjustments facing families after the war make it desirable for careful review of policies, organization, and programs in home demonstration work and for planning the future.

Purposes of First Committee Meeting

1. To consider some of the problems in the rapidly expanding field of family and community life.
2. To consider possible needed changes in organization and policies of extension work to better adapt it to the most important needs to today and tomorrow.
3. To draft recommendations and plans for further consideration by staff members in States and regions of these and other problems of concern to rural families.

The Expanding Program in Family Living

The present-day concept of a program in family living on the part of extension workers and farm people themselves can be reviewed as follows:

In addition to continued programs in foods and nutrition, clothing, household management, and home furnishings, rural families are requesting help in such fields as health and medical care, farm and home financial planning, consumer education, parent education, and family life. Rural people are concerned about community welfare and activities such as schools, libraries and recreation facilities. War has broadened the interests of rural people. They have an increasing concern in public affairs beyond their local community. They are turning to extension agents for information and guidance in their broadened interests.

The Housing Program

Farm people are aware of the need for better housing. Many who have war savings have earmarked some of the savings for remodeling or building new houses when materials are available. Extension assistance should be based on the assumption of an accelerated program in housing for the next 10 years.

There is need for training extension workers in various phases of housing if they are to give families the kind of educational assistance they want and need. The committee recommends: As a means of providing in-service training, the committee recommends that States hold short courses or workshops for county and State personnel, both men and women. It also recommends that institutes be held at State and county levels for the training of lay people who are interested in building. It is advisable also that conferences be held for local builders and suppliers to acquaint them with ways in which they can best serve farm

1193(7-46)

families. It is recommended to States not having specialists in the field of architecture and housing that it would be of great advantage to the housing program if such specialists could be employed.

The committee recommends that State educational institutions in which housing is receiving major consideration in the curriculum be asked to offer intensive short courses in housing (a 2 or 3 weeks' period) and the extension workers in other States be invited to attend. It might be advisable to set them up as noncredit courses.

The Health Program

The U. S. Public Health Service records show the health situation to be worse in rural than in urban areas, a major factor being the shortage of doctors, dentists, and lack of clinics, hospitals, and other health facilities. The committee recommends: That the Extension Service broaden the scope of its activities to help rural families recognize their health problems and work toward obtaining the health facilities and services they need.

It is recognized that if a health program is to be effective, it will require the cooperation of all interested organizations and agencies working closely with county and State health departments. The committee recommends: That additional Federal and State personnel be assigned to guide this expanding program and to assist rural people in organizing their resources toward a solution of their health problems.

Personnel Policies

In order to maintain adequate extension personnel to meet the demands of rural families for assistance in the educational program in family living, consideration must be given to the following: (1) Salaries comparable to those of other workers with similar training and experience. (2) Adequate budget for operation, such as office and clerical expenses, travel and demonstration materials. (3) Leave for study or travel, retirement and disability benefits.

Reaching More Homemakers

In 1944, home demonstration work influenced $3\frac{1}{2}$ million homes in the United States including 2 million farm homes. From this report we can conclude that two-thirds of farm homes are not influenced to any appreciable extent by home demonstration work.

Special effort should be made to interest more young homemakers and young married couples to participate in home demonstration programs and activities, 4-H Club work with older girls needs emphasizing, and more definite policies for work with urban homemakers in villages, towns, and cities, will need to be considered in the future.

We shall need to inform the general public more extensively to insure public understanding and widespread participation in home demonstration programs.

